

A

REVIEW

OF THE

STATE

OF THE

BRITISH NATION.

 Saturday, July 14. 1711.

IN the Course of this Paper, it has been the Author's Lot to speak OF various Sorts of People, as well as TO them; innumerable Crafts, Subtilties, Tricks, Cheats and Contrivances of Men, to amuse, abuse, and impose upon one another. gives Authors who write for Observation, just Ground of Reflections; and he that Animadverts upon your real Follies, gives wiser and honest Men Room to mend them.

I cannot think that Author was so far Mistaken, as some People said he was, who said, this Age was gone Lunatick, and that the World was one great *Bedlam*, and all

kinds of Men out of their Wits — I will not say, you are all Mad together, but I think verily it may be said, without Reproach to our good Manners, that we are all Mad in our Turn.

To inoperative the Madnets of this Age, would take up more Volumes of this Work than are already Writ, and a Man might Ring more Changes upon the Lunacies of the Times, than upon *Sr. Brilles-nep Set* of Bells: We have Mad-Men of every Kind, of every Party, of every Calling, and of every Denomination among us, *States-Men Mad*, *Church-Men Mad*, *Dissenters Mad*, *Tories Mad*, *Whigs Mad*, *Tradesmen Mad*, *Cities*,

Cities, Towns, Companies, Corporations, a general Lunacy seems to touch us all—

Some are Mad with too much Business, and some Rage and Clamour for want of Employments; some have so much Money they know not what to do with it, others so little, they know not what to do without it; some are Mad with *other Men's* Knavery, and some make other People Mad with *their own*.

Innumerable Extravagant Things are done here every Day, which serve as so many Testimonies to my Opinion; *10 Day* Men sell real Stock for little Money, *10 Morrow* buy *Bearskins* for great Summs. *here* they sell nothing for something, and there sell something for nothing; *A* sells *B* Stock in a Company, and takes his Money upon the Contract, when he has not one Penny Stock to deliver, that's selling *nothing* for *something*: *C* sells *D* Goods out of his Shop upon his Credit, when he (*D*) has neither Cash nor Foundation of Credit to buy upon, and *that's* selling *something* for *nothing*: Men buy Air for Money, and sell Money for Air.

In *Exchange Alley* they buy Cities, sell Armies, make Contracts for Votes, buy and sell *P*——ts, they take Towns bespeak Victories, Cheat their Fathers, and Stock-Job the Nation.

Let us step from hence to a certain Place in the World, call'd *G——d Hall*: Bless us! Gentlemen Com. C——bs, What mad Doings has here been? Now we are all turn'd *Fowlers*, and once a Year we go *A BIRDING*; whether we shoot *Owls*, *Woodcocks*, or *Widgeons*, or what ever Game we hit, 'tis the *Money we pursue*; and over all the Hedges and Ditches of Law, Constitution, Religion, and *Morality* we go, like Men of Prey, I had almost said Beasts of Prey: To say this is a *City Frenzy*, is one of the best Natur'd Things can be thought of, for us——Nothing but *Bed-Jam*, can bring us off from the more Scandalous Reflections that touch our City Morals; indeed being loth to call it *K—ry*, I found this out for an Equivalent, and I hope have very much oblig'd the City in

the Discovery; under the Notion of *Lunacy*, you may Merit some Compassion from the World, but really, the other Way, I know not what to make of it——Should I be Mannerly, and suppose these People to be in their Wits, I should be oblig'd to call them a Pack of ———. A Pack of what, says Roger the Countryman? Why a Pack of ——— *Citizens*. What d'ye think they thou'd be?

I confess, the Thing shocks my Charity, and I know not what to think of, or how to form an Excuse for this most Scandalous Practice, that so I might not be oblig'd to mingle too much Salt with the Remark.

I have been searching a Parallel, or something which bears a Similitude, to Represent this by; but tho' I have run through almost all the Kinds and Degrees of Crime I could think of, I cannot yet find a Thing equal to it in Guilt, nor Synonymous to it in Phrase.

1. *'Tis not Robbing on the High-Way*, No, 'tis a Degree worse than that; for there the Gentlemen come and give you fair Quarter for your Money, and if you will stand to your Tackle, you may win it and wear it; you have generally Room to fight for it, and if you lay about you handsomly, you may save it——But this is such a *C—t of C—ts*, here you are first hook'd in to swear *to obey the Command*, and then be Commanded to part with your Money; so that you are bound Hand and Foot first, and then laid in the Ditch and Rob'd at last; which in my Opinion is *very foul Play*, others may think of it as they please.

2. *Nor is it picking of Pockets*, NO, 'tis worse than that too; for that is done like an Artist, there's some dexterity, *Leger-de-main*, and some cleaver Management in the Cheat; but this is the *Sivoventiest Fraud*, the Clumsy st, Undress'd, more-stud'd Violence, it has neither *say well* nor *do well* in it; 'tis a taking a Man's Money away, only because he has it, and poss'ly sing it, only because we want it; it has no Cover or Concealments, but Robs the Man, and says tis no Sin; a meer Military Execution, a knocking

knocking down Argument, and the World cannot Match it.

3. *'Tis not Burglary*, NO, 'tis worse than that too; he that breaks open a House, does it *like a Crime*, in the Dark, and commits it as a Thing he is afraid of; when you catch him in the Fact he Pleads Guilty, and begs for Mercy, for Transportation, and the like; *but here*, in the open Day, in the Face of the Sun, the Man is Rob'd, is told on't before Hand, stands still to help bring it to pass, and sees the Thieves share the Money, and laugh at him.

4. *'Tis not Cheating*, NO, 'tis still worse than that; there are Hooks and Snares, Lies, false Smiles, canting Affirmations, and a Hundred Shop-keeping, Sharping, Whedles, muster'd together, to bring that to pass—— BUT HERE, with the Gravity of an Assembly in a Magisterial manner, *tho' Justice, I think, generally stands behind them*, with the Law before them, and the Executive Power in their Hands, they fairly put it to the Vote, *who and who shall be Robb'd, of how much and how often?*

Nor is it Stock-Jobbing, NO, tho' 'tis almost as bad as that too, but there is something of a profess'd Cheat in that, and therefore all Men are fairly caution'd to expect it; Fools *there*, are the Subject, Kn——s the Instrument; Tricking *there* is the Trade, and 'tis according to an Old Phrase of my sort of Latin, *qui sharpas sharpabitur*, the Net is spread in the sight of the Bird, and he that falls in it, goes, like Solomon's Fool to the *Correction of the Stocks*; BUT HERE publick Good is the Pretence they make, Legal Measures the Rule they go by; the Robbery is Establish'd upon Law, back'd by Prescription and Ancient Usage Time out of Mind, and from those Counterfelt Arguments Justified, the World blindly led into a Persuasion of its being Just, and the Innocent Objects Plunder'd *A-la-Mode* the Chamber of Orphans——.

O London, thou hadst better have built new Bordelloes——, &c.

But what then shall we call this Matter? and what is the Practice? For all the

the World that may see this Paper may not know what it is we talk of.

As to the Matter of Fact, it is a Consult once a Year for the Election of a Thing call'd a S——f—— Previous to it, there are Meetings of K——s, to Consult who it is fit to Nominate, *Anglicis* to Plunder, in which Consideration 'tis wisely remembered, who are most likely to hold *and who so Fine?*—— If there is an Ancient *Superannuated* Tradesman, incapable of Action, retir'd from Business, and perfectly unfit, either to be offer'd or accepted, no matter tho' he be as Deaf as Mr. B——y, as Decrepid as Mr. G——, as Crazy as Mr. N——, as Weak in the Head as Mr. ——, as Old as my Lord Mayor's Grandmother, nay, tho' he be half a Lunatick, as Mr. ——, a Miser as Mr. S——n, or a F——l as A. B. C. D. let him live in Town or out of Town—— The more Unquallify'd to serve, the better Quallify'd to pay the Fine, *which is the End of the Domination*, this Map is put up for Sh——f, and when he refuses to hold, as all Men know he must, then 400 l. must be paid to excuse him, the greatest Defence for which, that ever I heard of, ~~was, that the City is in Debt~~, and wants Money, that the Officers want their Salarie, and Money is wanting for many other Uses, which is the very same Excuse I design to make *when I turn Highway-men*.

As to what I shall call this —— If I would Study with all the Charity I am Master of, I cannot find one good Word to give it—— But as my Lord Russell said at his Trial, To kill by Forms of Law is the worst sort of Murder; for this is Plundering by Forms of Law, which is the worst sort of Robbery.

To make this more particularly unhappy, it is remarkable, that the Gentlemen that do it are all very *Honest Men*, Men of Characters and Reputation, Men that in their single Capacities would not do an ill Thing; Men of Honour and Value, and who Merit Esteem from all, as Men of real Personal Worth; to me it seems 'tis a Disgrace to the City, and to England in general,

and, for our National Reputation is touch'd in it, and to speak gravely, 'tis pity a Practice so Scandalous, should be Encourag'd by Man, that Abstracted from their publick Affairs, would scorn any Thing so Base — Upon the whole, not to flatter nor abuse them, the Character I shall give them upon it, shall be the same King Charles H. gave to this Worshipful Company of S——s, viz. That *take them apart, they were very Honest Citizens, when with them AS A COMPAN- NY, and they were — — — A COMPAN- NY.*

If any are Offended at my brief Observations on this unhappy Practice in this Nation, I had almost said City, and intend to Answer the Review, by Making it a Scandalous Assertion, my Answer is Manifest.

1. I own it is Printing a Scandal upon the City, but that is to be told God and the World at large, it is not a Scandal, for it is nothing but Truth, and is a Scandal, so nothing that is true can be a Scandal.

2. Be pleas'd to explode the Practice, you shall for ever silence the Complainer, and without it, never.
3. Prepare to blush at a black List of the Scandalous R——s of this Nature, Committed for these Ten Years past, and join'd with it a List, of how many for lesser Crimes ye have H——d at T——n in the same Time.
4. First punish the Emisaries, who go (I do not say are sent) about to pick out Men to put up who they can give Assurance of, that they will not hold.
5. Answer for it your selves, when in hopes of a Fine, Men are Nominated no Way Qualify'd but by their Money to hold the Office, and of whom it might be said, it is not fit to trust a City, a Bank, or the publick Peace to their keeping.

These Particulars furnish Matter for many Enlargements, which may be enter'd upon, as Occasion presents, when the Author comes back from the South-Sea.

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